cases, inadequate judge strength, granting of adjournments, radical change in the pattern of litigation, long arguments, etc. Cases of corruption do occasionally surface.

Various measures have been taken to expedite disposal of cases. These include, inter alia, amendment of the Civil Procedure Code and the Code of Criminal Procedure, increase in the number of posts of judges/Judicial officers, appointment of special Judicial/ Metropolitan Magistrates to dispose of petty criminal cases and adoption of other alternative modes of dispute resolution, such as. conciliation, mediation, arbitration and setting up of Lok Adalats, Special Courts and Tribunals.

The Government also proposes to set up a National Judicial Commission which will, inter alia, draw up a code of ethics for the judiciary.

Off Loading of Holdings by Financial Institutions

*231. SHRI C. RAMACHANDRAIAH: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Confederation of Indian Industry has demanded that the Financial Institutions be given free hand to off load their holding in poorly managed companies to the highest bidder without any Government interference;

(b) if so, the views of other industrial Federations in this regard; and

(c) the remedial measures proposed by Government to uplift companies in distress.

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI BALASABHED VIKHE PATIL): (a) and (b) The Confedertion of Indian Industry (CII) in a press release issued on 5th November, 1999 observed that repeated instances of mismanagement coupled with strategic debt defaults should be firmly responded to by lenders and shareholders alike. In such instances, the Financial Institutions (FIs) cannot be denied their right to protect their interests by selling their equity stakes at the highest bid to new management provided this is done is a fair and transparent manner. Other apex associations such as ASSOCHAM and FICCI hold the view that FIs, when considering divestment of their stake

in the companies, should give the first right of refusal to promoters at a fair market/negotiated price.

(c) Some of the measures initiated by Government to assist and revive sick industrial companies inter alia include establishment of Board for Industrial and Financial Reconstruction (BIFR) under the provisions of Sick Industrial Companies (Special Provisions) Act, 1985 with a view to securing timely detection of sick and potentially sick companies owning industrial undertakings, the speedy determination by a Board of experts of the preventive, ameliorative, remedial and other measures which need to be taken with respect to such companies and the expeditious enforcement of measures so determined, and for matters connected therewith or incidental thereto, issue of guidelines to banks by the Reserve Bank of India on grant of reliefs/concessions/assistance for rehabilitation of sick and potentially viable units and administration of Refinancing Scheme for Rehabilitation by Small Industries Development Bank of India (SIDBI) for revival of potentially viable sick small scale industrial units, and on one-time-settlement.

On Farm Water Management Scheme to Increase Crop Production

*232. DR. ARUN KUMAR SARMA: Will the Minister of WATER RESOURCES be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Ministry had decided to introduce an "On-Farm Water Management Scheme" for increasing crop production in Eastern India including Assam with the aim of increasing productivity of agricultural crops;

(b) if so, the circumstances necessitating introduction of such special scheme, salient features and present status of its implementation;

(c) the amount earmarked for the State of Assam to be utilized during 1999-2000; and

(d) the results obtained from introduction of Ganga Action Plan in Assam and the reasons for its discontinuation?